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courage is contagious

Viewing cable 04NASSAU487, CARICOM SURPRISED, UPSET, BUT NOT ANGRY BEING LEFT

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
04NASSAU487	2004-03-09 17:17	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Nassau

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.haiti-liberte.com/archives/volume5-1/Campagne%20des%20E.U..asp>
<http://www.haiti-liberte.com/archives/volume5-2/WikiLeaked%20Cables%20Reveal%20Obsessive.asp>
<http://www.haiti-liberte.com/archives/volume5-2/Campagne%20des%20E.U..asp>

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NASSAU 000487

SIPDIS

NSC FOR TOM SHANNON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/09/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SMIG](#) [HA](#) [BF](#)

SUBJECT: CARICOM SURPRISED, UPSET, BUT NOT ANGRY BEING LEFT
OUT OF ARISTIDE'S DEPARTURE

Classified By: CHARGE ROBERT M. WITAJEWSKI FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

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1. (C) Charge and Political Officer met with the Bahamian Ambassador to Haiti, Dr. Eugene Newry, and the Under Secretary in the Consular Section at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bahamian-Haitian expert, Mr. Carlton Wright, on March 8, 2004 to discuss Bahamian views of the current situation in Haiti. Ambassador Newry claimed that Caricom is not "angry" with the U.S. involvement in the departure of Aristide, but rather was "surprised" by the abrupt decision-making, and Caricom's lack of involvement. Newry downplayed incendiary phrases in Caricom's statement on Haiti such as expressing "alarm and dismay" as matter-of-fact descriptions of members' disappointment, but on a positive note he was quick to say that Caricom will be satisfied as long as their 10-point action plan remains the basis for post-Aristide Haiti and is implemented "as quickly and painlessly as possible." Only history, declared Newry, can determine whether or not ex-President Aristide left voluntarily, because neither he (i.e., The Bahamas) nor his regional colleagues were involved in that process. Bahamian officials were extremely complimentary and positive about joint U.S.-Bahamian efforts to deter or interdict intending Haitian immigrants.
END SUMMARY.

"LIKE A RIVER, THINGS MUST MOVE ON"

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12. (C) At a meeting with the Charge, Bahamian Ambassador to Haiti, Dr. Eugene Newry, characterized Caricom's harshly worded "Statement on the Situation in Haiti" as "frank," but was not a message of "anger." In fact, he said he and fellow Bahamian officials were quite pleased that changes being implemented now in Haiti, such as the Tripartite Council and the Council of Eminent Persons, come straight from the 10-Point Caricom Plan for Haiti. In Newry's opinion, the only place in which Caricom has disagreed with the Opposition was in its desire for the Democratic Platform to be the only political group.

13. (C) Although Ambassador Newry suggested that Caricom's members were irritated with the lack of consultation and the abruptness by which Aristide left office, he also indicated that Caricom is pleased, nonetheless, that its plan is apparently still being implemented. As he put it, "a rose by any other name is still a rose." He said he will leave it to the historians to determine what exactly happened on the night Aristide fled Haiti. However, he concluded, Caricom needs to get over its pique because "like a river, things must move on", and he understood that Haiti cannot advance without the help that only the United States with the ancillary support of other "major powers" such as Canada and France could deliver.

WHEN WILL CARICOM RE-ENGAGE?

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14. (C) When asked at what The Bahamas would "re-engage" in Haiti, Ambassador Newry ardently argued that neither Caricom nor The Bahamas has ever "disengaged" from Haiti. He stressed that he only left Haiti for "consultations" with the Bahamian Government, and that as the only Caricom ambassador actually resident in Haiti, he plans to return "shortly." When pressed, however, Ambassador Newry acknowledged that he couldn't define a time frame. But, he hastened to add, from Nassau he was in "daily contact" with Ambassador Foley and both pro-Aristide and opposition figures in Haiti.

15. (C) From a personnel standpoint, Ambassador Newry admitted that Caricom would not be involved in the initial multinational interim force in Haiti, but said that Caricom would be willing to participate -- if only symbolically -- in the follow-on stabilization UN presence. He thinks that this stabilization phase could start as early as the next 60 days.

INTERIM HAITIAN GOVERNMENT - NOT TOO SHABBY

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16. (C) Ambassador Newry told Charge and political officer that he was pleasantly surprised with the transition now occurring. He indicated that it was a good sign that the Haitian people overall had focused their mistrust and dislike on the ex-President. He said that his contacts with the opposition has assured him that they would continue to work with the Lavalas party and that the party itself had not been tainted by the same image of corruption as was ex-President Aristide. Newry also found to be positive the fact that the interim government retained some of the people closely associated with ex-President Aristide in positions of power. Ambassador Newry took this as a sign of good faith on the part of the opposition.

17. (C) Discussing the composition of the interim authority, Ambassador Newry was optimistic. He knew personally and professionally many of the members of the Tripartite Committee as well as the Council of Eminent Persons and considered them of high calibre. He also considered it an asset that these individuals were not predominantly attorneys, but rather surgeons, sociologists, and other professionals.

18. (C) The Bahamian representative in Haiti believed that it would be premature to try to hold elections in the near future. In his view, he thought that it would take at least 90 days for the interim government to re-establish itself. Newry did not believe that the country's political parties would be prepared to hold meaningful elections for at least twelve to eighteen months, at best.

19. (C) Asked about the danger of the interim authority using the period until elections to consolidate its power and thereby arrange to win the forthcoming elections, Ambassador Newry said that this had been anticipated by Caricom in its action plan. As a consequence, one of the key elements in Caricom's action plan was a stipulation that no one in the transitional government in Haiti can run for office once the permanent government is established. Ambassador Newry saw this provision as a "sign of maturity" and a way to prevent innumerable problems.

U.S.- BAHAMIAN COOPERATION

10. (C) Turning to U.S.-Bahamian cooperation to prevent an outflow of Haitian migrants to either The Bahamas or to the United States, the Bahamian Foreign Ministry officials were effusive in their praise of the current effort. The U.S., and Bahamian, presence in the Windward Passage had "never been so successful" in deterring an outflow of illegal migrants, Newry declared. While noting the costs of such an on-going operation, both Newry and Wright acknowledged that it was still much less expensive for The Bahamas than would be the total costs of detaining, maintaining, and then re-patriating illegal Haitian migrants once they reached The Bahamas.

COMMENT

10. (C) Ambassador Newry was perhaps overreaching in trying to put a positive spin on Caricom's March 3 statement on Haiti and reflecting more of the real politik position that The Bahamas takes regarding Haitian migration than the more ideological position of some of the other, less affected, Caricom members. Newry has also briefed both the Prime Minister and the Cabinet en banc on the situation in Haiti and his effusive praise of U.S.-Bahamian cooperation in the Windward Passage reflects the realism of Prime Minister Perry Christie and Deputy Prime Minister Cynthia Pratt than Foreign Minister Fred Mitchell. Surprisingly, Newry downplayed ex-President Aristide's attempt to remain engaged from afar. He did not think that Aristide's attempts to regain support via press encounters in the Central African Republic would impact on future Haiti developments. His one caveat was that Aristide's Lavalas Party is still extremely organized, especially relative to the loose coalition of opposition "parties" united only by a negative...their opposition to Aristide. His fear was that Aristide's support network would re-group in time for the next set of elections while the Opposition coalition would fall apart once the "negative force," i.e., Aristide, disappeared from the scene as an effective player.

WITAJEWSKI